

and then no further notice taken of the matter! but I shall be happy to render any local assistance, describing public erections or making you sketches of buildings in my neighbourhood, or forwarding to you designs. Give me an opportunity, and try whether Yorkshiresites are not willing to advance the interests of their class, "for where there's a will there's a way."—ELVING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

DEAR SIR,—As an architectural student, I shall feel extremely obliged by your advice in determining the course of my subsequent studies in architectural science. At the present time I am vacillating amongst various impulses, and troubled as to the precise path I must select and eventually adhere to with a steady and persevering industry, in the presumption of arriving ultimately at some degree of perfection. I have hitherto devoted my attention to all styles indiscriminately, and have now begun to think seriously of the matter, but confess that my opinions and determinations are shaken in a great degree by the conflicting ideas and criticisms of two of the greatest professors of the architectural art in the present age, viz. *Leo Von Klenze*, and *Augustus Welby Pugin*. The former of these gentlemen asserts that Greek architecture is superior to all others, and ultimately must become not only the architecture of Europe, but of the civilized world; while the latter treats Greek works with utter contempt, and asserts that Gothic architecture is infinitely superior to every other kind, and should be universally adopted in preference to all others for most purposes. When such eminent professors as these so widely disagree, who shall decide?

Now, Mr. Editor, I am prepared to meet the most conflicting opinions, and am willing to allow and praise the decorated Greek splendour of the Glyptotheca at Munich, by Von Klenze, and also the varied outlines and gorgeous combinations in some of Mr. Pugin's works, but I cannot drive from my imagination the picturesque magnificence of Castle Howard, and Blenheim House, by Vanburgh, nor the classic beauty of St. Paul's, in London, and other works at Oxford, &c., by Sir Christopher Wren, together with numerous other productions of a very different class to the favoured styles advocated by Klenze and Pugin.

Perhaps you will address me thus:—Mr. Student, pray banish from your mind altogether the opinions of others and judge for yourself; reject the bad and incongruous, and adopt the good. Well, so far agreed; but by what means shall I determine which particular style is the *best* ideal of perfection, for we have the Egyptian, with its severe, massive, and imposing grandeur; the Greek, with its exquisite proportions, purity, and elegance; the Roman, with its magnificent entablatures and domes; the Gothic, with its gorgeous and picturesque sublimity; the Tudor, with its suaveness and comfort; the Elizabethan, with its grotesque embellishments; and the French, with its redundancy of ornament, and meretricious splendour; and many others I might name.

Now, Sir, I think amongst these various styles of architecture which have prevailed in the world at various periods of its history, you will own with me that it is a somewhat difficult matter to choose the unerring path to excellence and perfection, and trusting that you will aid me by your opinion and suggestions in the matter through the pages of your excellent work.

I am yours very truly,
GEORGE WALHEIM.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, April 7, 1843.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—Your impartiality on the many subjects that have already found place in the columns of THE BUILDER induces me to seek your opinion of an entirely new form of block for wood-paving, which I am prepared to submit for that purpose, and as advocacy of my invention, should it bear the test of investigation, as to the combination of qualities requisite in the superstructure of a road-way of this description.

I have been, from an early period of the revolution in the old system of paving with stone, an attentive observer of what has been done; and it is only upon deliberate conviction of having effected valuable improvements that I could venture to trespass upon you with this application. These consist, first, of a form of block embracing so much economy in the conversion of timber as to permit the use of the foreign material, notwithstanding the establishment of the high rate of duty which precludes the use of it in any of the shapes heretofore introduced; secondly, a constructive principle which should, if unprejudiced judgment may yet prevail, supersede the entire dependence upon artificial means to the same end, by dwelling, clamping, &c.; thirdly, it presents the angularity of stone which I believe to

be rightly estimated as the best for sustaining the wear, by traction and percussion, of a public road.

It is only upon evidence of these properties in my plan that I presume to rest any pretension to notice. I can but be aware of the partialities and prejudices excited and kept up on the subject of wood pavements, the public being hitherto passive in the struggle going on for possession of the field, by one or other of the contending parties. If, however, I may be allowed to refer to all precedent, the rate-payers have so manifest a cause for interposition, that this state of things must shortly give place to more careful and deliberate decisions than any yet arrived at.

I may farther, as matter of public notoriety, allude to the recent advertisements of the Metropolitan Wood Paving Company *versus* Mr. Lee Stephens, on the subject of Mr. Filbrow's invention (or rather attempted improvement upon their patent), and the former gentleman's smart retort, and if the parties are really in earnest, we are on the eve of interesting disclosures. Mr. Alexander B. Blackie, the representative of No. 1 in the long list of patentees of wood pavements, also has some queries in your last Journal addressed to Mr. Lee Stevens, insinuating unfair management on the part of the Metropolitan Company, during the very active and successful battle he fought in their cause; and inferring, upon the whole, an unfavourable condition of the exclusive privileges of that association. Out of these very natural dissensions among those who contend for monopoly, good may probably arise; the public will pause before it further commits its purse and interests to the exclusive keeping of those who are loudest in their claims, and leisure will be found to compare the actual merits of the several plans which have, so far, served but to perplex the brains and empty the pockets of the inventors.

I do not consider myself entitled, in this stage of my application, to enter upon a comparison of my own plan with any other, but will, with your permission, add a few words upon the qualities of timber, as the material common to all, which, after all, will be found to have much to do with the permanence the public have a right to insist on in a wood-road-way. It has been the practice in the most extensive contracts that have been undertaken to use Scotch fir, and this without regard to fitness; I mean, first, as to the age or maturity of the tree; secondly, with respect to British-grown timber, without the distinction that should have been instituted between timber of natural growth and plantation timber, the latter being greatly inferior; thirdly, without regard to the proportion in which tops of trees have been currently converted into wood-paving; and so palpable has this neglect already become, that it would not be difficult at once to point out inferior and defective blocks, taken from the tops of trees wholly unfit for this use, while it may be surmised that the buts of the said trees, as of more value, have taken a direction widely diverging from the streets of London.

I do not deny, Mr. Editor, that this is one of the arguments in my favour; it arises out of facts, and I have therefore a right to avail myself of it: is there a paving board in the metropolis who would, even within a shilling or two a yard, prefer Scotch fir to foreign timber? If the reply be in the negative, I may hope through your intervention to meet with encouragement I might vainly seek by desultory efforts, and with fruitless results, opposed as I should be by interested parties, and a clashing of interests too deeply pledged for retreat.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,
April 10, 1843. B. R. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—I received THE BUILDER, and I have given orders for four sets of the back numbers, and four sets also of the forthcoming numbers for three months; through the stationer of this place, and I have the pleasure to say that I found THE BUILDER's materials far beyond my expectations. I consider it is calculated to be of practical and permanent good to the different branches connected with the building trade, and whatever service I can render in my humble sphere shall most willingly be devoted to it, in assisting to keep it in its "present tenable repair;" and it shall be my constant study (as it is to the interest of all mechanical subscribers) to introduce this work to the public, and endeavour to prevail on them to become subscribers. We must not suffer to fall into decay for want of the requisite materials this truly precious undertaking; a work that has been so long wanted for our information. If you think this unconnected recommendation is calculated to be of any benefit to this "noble structure," you are at liberty to publish it in your next.

Before I conclude, allow me to wish you every success, and may God speed you in this work is the prayer of an humble, though never the less sincere admirer of this new project.

I am, Sir, yours sincerely,
Thrapston, April 8th, 1843. C. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—In the last number of your journal you state that Mr. Todd had obtained the premium for the Spalding almshouses. Does this gentleman know, and do the other competitors know, that a bricklayer's son, a bricklayer by trade, and who has yet obtained his living by bricklaying only—that this person has been employed by the committee of gentlemen to attend at one of their houses (Dr. Crumrack's) to copy, trace, and call, the best parts of each design on purpose that the committee may obtain a design to suit themselves, and be enabled to do without an architect, and employ this bricklayer to superintend these almshouses?

Yours, &c.

A COMPETING ARCHITECT.

[If the above be true, we have another evidence afforded us of the necessity of an instant revision of the system of competitions—first, we have the anomaly of a self-constituted jury of taste, and now we have their indignity perpetrated on those who chose to submit to that constitution. Depend upon it, architects are as much to blame as those committees. We have not had the opportunity of completing our article on competition, but we will resume it in the next number, and shew our views of what becomes the profession to aim at in these particulars.—Ed.]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

April 11th, 1843.

SIR,—I am a reader of THE BUILDER, and I rejoice to think that such a mighty engine (for I am sure it will become so) has come in operation. Being a mechanic myself, I now feel that we can hold intercourse with each other. We can state our opinions as to the effect which machinery has on us as a body; and not only machinery, but every other subject which affects us. And I hope subjects will be discussed in a rational and brotherly spirit. My object in writing this is to ask any of your correspondents whether a machine is in existence for cutting the trenails to door rails without any labour from the joiner? Any information on the particular subject will oblige.

A YOUNG JOINER.

P.S.—Enclosed I send you six shillings for the benefit of those unfortunate "brethren" who have lost their tools, and consequently the means of gaining a livelihood.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—A beautiful monument exists in the south transept of Westminster Abbey; that monument, it is necessary to say (the inscription being all but obliterated), was, according to Stow, raised by Nicholas Brigham, gentleman, to the memory of the most famous poet of England, Geoffrey Chaucer.

I was rather surprised, a few days since, upon entering the Abbey, to find that the workmen employed cleaning the abominations which debase its venerable walls, had neglected to remove even the dust from that monument.

I imagined that a restoration was contemplated, or that it was at least an oversight; but, on inquiry, learned, alas! that no restoration was contemplated, nor even that it was to be treated like the rest! I ask, is it to remain as it is?

The public are not to be blamed for the neglect with which it has hitherto been treated, but they will be very much so if it continues to be neglected. It would cost but little to restore it in a proper manner; its material is Purbeck marble, which has been adorned with a coat of black paint. But I need not describe it; let those to whom it may be interesting go and satisfy themselves. My task is done; let some open a subscription. I do not doubt it would be followed up. The office of THE BUILDER, surely, would not be an inappropriate place. Nay, the whole Abbey is fast crumbling to decay, but let us begin with this, and hope for better things. ALPHA.

THE ÆOLIAN HARP.—This instrument consists of a long narrow box of very thin deal, about five or six inches deep, with a circle in the middle of the upper side, of an inch and a-half in diameter, in which are to be drilled small holes. (In this side seven, ten, or more strings of very fine gut are stretched over bridges at each end, like the bridge of a fiddle, and screwed up or relaxed with screw-pins. The strings must be all tuned to one and the same note, and the instrument be placed in some current of air, where the wind can pass over the strings with freedom. A window, of which the width is exactly equal to the length of the harp, with the seal just raised to give the air admission, is a proper situation. When the air blows upon these strings with different degrees of force, it will execute different tones of sound; sometimes the blast brings out all the tones in full concert, and sometimes it sinks them to the softest murmurs.

* It is generally believed that he was buried beneath it, but Stow says that he was buried in the cloister.